



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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**GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES STATEWIDE EDUCATION POLICY NAMED
21st CENTURY SKILLS PRACTICE OF THE YEAR**
State Earns Inaugural Award from National Partnership for 21st Century Skills

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley announced today that North Carolina’s education policy on 21st century skills has been named a “Practice of the Year” by a national education advocacy group. The award was presented at the Partnership for 21st Century Skills annual best practices meeting in Charleston, West Virginia.

“From our pre-k *More at Four* classrooms to our innovative *Learn and Earn* high schools, we are working on every level to make sure North Carolina’s education system prepares students for a future in this century, not the last,” Easley said. “We were proud to become the first state to join the national Partnership and we are honored to receive this inaugural award and to serve as a model for other states.”

Judges selected the best practices on the basis of innovation, potential for replication in other states and how the practices incorporate the national Partnership’s “Framework for 21st Century Learning.” The framework emphasizes skills such as information and communication technology literacy, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, global awareness, business, economic and civic literacy and other skills business leaders have identified as critical to an employee’s success in the global economy.

North Carolina was selected for the honor because state leaders have created a comprehensive school reform effort to change the way schools operate to reflect the 21st century skills demanded by the global economy. As a part of this reform effort, in 2005, Easley established the nation’s first Center for 21st Century Skills, housed in the North Carolina Business Committee for Education (NCBCE.) The NCBCE works with the State Board of Education to develop new assessments for students and professional development for teachers that reflect 21st century demands.

Easley’s nationally recognized *Learn and Earn* Early College high schools were also recognized at the Partnership’s annual meeting. The schools are located on community college or university campuses and offer students the opportunity to take college-level courses and obtain both a high school diploma and an associate’s degree or two years of transferable university credit after up to five years of study. There are 33 *Learn and Earn* early college high schools currently in operation around the state and Easley plans to open 20 new sites in 2007-08 school year.